

# The Republican.

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## FURTHER CONTROVERSY ON THE QUESTION OF ATTRIBUTING INTELLIGENCE TO DEI- TY, OR ALMIGHTY POWER.

TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

MR. CARLILE,

Nov. 16, 1823.

I TAKE this opportunity of addressing a few lines to you, upon account of a principle you hold forth to the world with a spirit and confidence scarcely ever equalled. The principle I am advertising to, is *Atheism*; for you do not hesitate to declare that *there is no God*; that there is nothing but matter and motion; and you call forth all existing knowledge to disprove this, your assertion. For my part, *I feel entirely convinced of the truth of the existence of a God*; and if you will be pleased to insert these lines in your *Republican*, I shall feel very much obliged.

You say that the existence of an infinite intelligent being, is not capable of demonstration. I think to the contrary. In my opinion, such a being may be demonstrated with as much precision, as any geometrical problem. And to begin, I will premise one general principle, which is this, that there is *no effect without a cause*. This being premised, it naturally follows, that all effects, or all things which have a beginning or existence (which of course are effects) must depend upon something which has no beginning. Now, *a being that has no beginning must be self-existent*, that is, it must exist in such a manner, that non-existence with it must be an absolute impossibility; or in other words, actual existence must be essential to the very nature of it. If something had not existed from eternity, without cause, there never could have been any thing existing; and the reason why such a being exists is, because the very nature of it is such, that non-existence with it, is absolutely impossible. Now, a being that is self-existent must be incapable of alteration: for if it could receive any kind of change, or alteration, no reason could be assigned why it has its present mode of existence, rather than another: and as all beings which are finite are capable of alteration, and change, it follows, as a natural consequence, that this being must be infinite, and absolutely perfect, without any kind of imperfection or defect; without any kind of com-

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position or distinction of parts. Now a being possessing full perfection and complete all-sufficiency for all ends and purposes whatever, is the only being that is compatible with absolute necessity of existence. For being absolutely perfect, no addition can be made to its greatness, and being without any kind of composition, nothing from it can be taken away. The too common ascription of personalities, and attributes to the great first cause, is highly absurd and inconsistent, as nothing can be self-existent but one infinite indistinct essence. Now let us apply this description of a first cause to the already known properties of matter, and see whether the nature of matter is compatible with the nature of a self-existent being. In my opinion they are widely different.

*Matter may be conceived as not existing, we can imagine any portion of it out of its place, without any other portion entering the same place; and if any part of matter may be absent from its place, all its parts may be absent from the place they occupy.* But a self-existent being cannot be conceived as not existing, without a manifest contradiction in terms. Matter is not a perfect being; it is imperfect and defective; it has not the power to exert itself at pleasure, which would be a grand perfection to it. It has every appearance of being finite and limited. Matter is a compound of parts; but observe, something that is made up of parts can never be infinite; for no number can be so great but more may be added to it. All the parts of matter have their place and situation; all the parts are bounded and limited, therefore there can be no such thing as unbounded matter. Matter is neither infinite nor eternal, nor any thing else, that includes in its idea, either corporeal, magnitude, or successive duration. There can be no such thing as an infinity of time; for we have no idea of time, but as having been once present; and as all the parts of time have been once present, there can be no such thing as time that has no beginning. Matter is not a self-existing being, for it not only may be conceived as not existing but is capable of a variety of changes and alterations. If matter was infinite; *if all space was full of matter there could be no motion*, for there would be no place for any one single particle to move into. But we see there is motion, we see matter move from place to place, consequently matter is finite. From this it appears, that matter and all other beings, that are imperfect, finite, and limited, are the productions of an infinite perfect being, which alone is self-existent, being incapable of increase or diminution, change or alteration.

The existence of God may be inferred from the construction of human bodies, and all animals; and likewise from the growth of plants, and vegetables: for how is it possible for undesigning and unintelligent matter, to form itself into a human body. All the ingenuity of all men put together can do nothing towards making a being with life and sensation, much less can insensible particles of matter do any thing of the kind. As matter in its natural state is unin-



telligent, no composition or formation can ever alter its nature. What can any form, change, or motion of matter do towards making itself intelligent? Certainly nothing. Look at the growth of plants and vegetables, and give us to understand how it is possible for the matter lying at the root of a tree, to ascend up the trunk, and through the various branches, and so dispose of itself as to be conducive to the formation of the tree? How can it be ordered by unintelligent matter which particle or particles arising from the root shall form a part of the trunk, which a part of the bough, which a part of the twig, the leaf or the apple? It appears to be absolutely impossible for bare matter to do these things. There must be a designing power in all this; a constant and regular powerful agency on all the parts of matter according to pre-established rules; and this regular agency constitutes the laws of nature. With these few observations I shall conclude.

JAMES TAYLOR.

Waterhead-mill, near Oldham,  
Lancashire.

TO MR. JAMES TAYLOR, WATERHEAD-MILL,  
NEAR OLDHAM, LANCASHIRE.

SIR, *Dorchester Gaol, Dec. 6, 1823.*

I TAKE your letter to be a last effort on the part of a few individuals in your neighbourhood to prolong a defence of that principle of *nullity* with which Mr. Fitton opened his correspondence. To you, life seems a blank, if you have not something in the shape of an idol to worship; and you cherish beguilement from a love of delusion, just as the toper resorts to his draughts, and the opium-eater to his pills, to set aside his natural sensations and to indulge in vain and unprofitable imaginations.

You call mine a principle of *Atheism*, which I grant to be the case in relation to the sort of theism which it opposes; but strictly speaking, I am deeply in search of the one or the many true Gods. I care not how many there be, so as I can find them and have a certain knowledge that they are something more than the creatures of my imagination. In repelling the charge of *Atheism*, I claim no consideration beyond an admission that I do not oppose *that knowledge* which is founded in things demonstrable. I do not say *there is no God*, in the general sense of the term. I know of no such a God as you write about, and I ask you to explain, to exhi-

bit, to demonstrate something as the sign of your words, when you say *you feel entirely convinced of the truth of the existence of an intelligent God*. If you write truth, if you do feel so entirely convinced, you can do what I require from you—you can convince me by such an explanation, such an exhibition; such a demonstration, as no human sense can slight.

The *no effect without a cause* proves nothing on the side of an intelligent God—it is the strong hold of the Materialist. All the effects you behold are material, all the causes you know are material causes; therefore, you cannot go beyond your knowledge that all you see as to cause and effect is a mere change of quality in any given object—a composition, decomposition, or recomposition of ingredients or materials. You may trace causes to effects, but your causes must be materially visible: you may ponder on effects where the causes are hidden from your sight or knowledge, but you can trace nothing without a material guide: a material link that leads you from one to another material quality.

There are those who scout the use of the word *matter*, by saying, that it neither defines nor proves any thing, and I grant, that I have no claim upon the use of the word but as an affair of general consent. The spiritualist feels a repugnance to part with the word *spirit*, but he would feel more repugnance to part with the word *matter*; and if all our disputes could be settled by the use of some third word, or by relinquishing both words, *spirit and matter*, I will readily yield that which is my favourite and consent not to talk or write about any thing but such as all will alike approve.

The words of general dispute, even among philosophers, are *God, Nature, Spirit, Matter, Soul, Mind, Infinite, Eternal, Universe, Almighty, First Cause, Religion*, with some few others, correlative in their meaning to one or the other of those mentioned. A little reflection convinces us that one and all of these words may be advantageously dispensed with, since they stand for nothing determinate, teach us nothing, and are the source of nothing but quarrel. We do not quarrel about any thing we know and have in common use, and, as utility, in relation to human pleasure, in all that the wise man has need to contend for, so he may wisely cease to use words that are not useful. This can only be done as a matter of general consent; for so long as any man will continue to use the word *spirit*, another will be driven to *matter*, as a material weapon where with to combat him.

*Matter*, is certainly a term of general use by general con-



sent, as a general sign of every known thing; but, beyond this, no definition of the meaning of the word can be given. *Spirit*, is a word that has nothing as its sign, that has no kind of definition, and is so far a word of less value and utility than the word *matter*. But I am ready to meet the spiritualist any where or upon any terms of public good and general utility.

You, Mr. Taylor, from the greater weight of the word *matter*, from the greater amount of knowledge connected with that word, than with the word *God* or *Spirit*, you might more prudently and more usefully have said, that your *self-existent being without beginning, your first cause*, is the whole of that which we know under the general term of *matter*. We know thus much by experience, but we have no knowledge beyond this point. As a proof of this, I will analyze your definition of matter.

You say: "*Matter may be conceived as not existing, we can imagine any portion out of its place, without any other portion entering the same place; and if any part of matter may be absent from its place, all its parts may be absent from the place they occupy.*" This assertion proves but one thing, and that is your ignorance of the chemical properties of the general term *matter*.

Matter, in its abstract or chaotic sense, may be supposed to be one general mass of uniform consistence or density. This mass has the property to form sediment, so that one part shall become more dense and the other more fluid to certain degrees. But, however rare the fluid may become, it has no more resemblance to vacuity than that which is most dense. This principle may be clearly elucidated by the power of steam. Take any vessel of any strength and so confine water in it, that when heated to steam it cannot escape, and you will find it burst at a certain degree of continued heat on the water. Now what have you done to make it burst the vessel? Have you added more matter? No: for the heat communicated can scarcely be considered an addition of matter. You have merely changed the quality of matter in the vessel from what it was when the fire first came in contact with it. Remove your fire just before your steam is so far expanded as to burst the vessel, suffer it to cool, and you find that your quantity of water is near the same as you put in the vessel. Give passage to the steam and you may evaporate the whole: but have you lost the water that was in your vessel? It has slipped through your hands, unless you have been prepared with another vessel to

receive and condense the steam back to water; but there was no matter less, nothing lost in the aggregate mass of matter, though the quality of the contents of your vessel might have varied. So it is with every known variety of matter. Every substance may be gaseated: every gass may be condensed to a liquid: every liquid may be fixed to the highest degree of density by the aid of mixtures. If you increase the quantity of dense or solid matter, you rarify that which is fluid: to increase that which is fluid, you must gaseate that which is dense. You may obtain demonstration of this by a thousand different processes: and such a demonstration teaches you the indestructibility of matter, and that you *cannot* conceive its destruction or deprivation of existence. The same principle overthrows your notions of spirit or intelligent God, because, it enables your imagination to work without them. It shews you, that, though variations from fluidity to solidity may occasion a change of parts, yet the great whole sustains no change, or is not affected by a change of parts. It is *solid* acting upon *fluid* and *fluid* upon *solid* and this forms the summit of human conception.

"*If all space was full of matter there could be no motion.*" This is another most erroneous idea. There is no matter so solid but that some degree of fluidity will penetrate its pores: and that solid matter will move in fluid matter is well understood. The atmosphere of the earth is matter, it moves in us and we in it. The same with water and aquatic animals. No man ought to write a word about matter until he has an insight of the science of chemistry. Your letter does not exhibit a knowledge of any one property of matter, and yet you write quite glibly about its being this and not being that! All your logic about *perfect being, self-existent being, infinite, indistinct essence* amounts to nothing: it neither proves nor defines any thing. It is all supposition, fancy, imagination, and applies as well to matter in the mass as to any other idea.

Before you attempt to write about the word *God*, you should understand what you mean by it. An infinite *indistinct* essence is a pompous correlative for the word *nothing*. The only definition for the word *God* is *human ignorance*. We borrow it from the Saxons, and they meant it as an expression of the principle of *good*: tell me what you mean by it: look round and seek the substance of which you make it the sign. If you can find no such substance—*be wise*, and join me in discarding the use of the word.

Your inference, that a God is required to produce ani-



mals and vegetables amounts to this. The production of animals and vegetables being a matter above your knowledge, you have the vanity to create a power as a satisfaction to your ignorant curiosity. Be content with what you can know, and seek real improvement in that only path in which it is attainable: trace effects to their causes; but do not be content with suppositions or invented causes. Learn that intelligence is the result of human ingenuity, a possession created or acquired by man himself, and not necessarily existent with the human frame. Millions of men have passed through life as utterly void of intelligence as any the most dull animal; where was your intelligent God with respect to such men? Does his intelligence improve only in a ratio with that of mankind? And since we know positively that intelligence springs from human labour and human ingenuity, may we not ask whether man communicates it to God or God to man?

*"Give us to understand how it is possible for the matter lying at the root of a tree, to ascend up the trunk, and through the various branches, and so dispose of itself as to be conducive to the formation of the tree."* I do not see upon what ground I am required to give you any such information. My ignorance upon this matter cannot strengthen your conclusions; because, if your knowledge be superior to mine upon this subject, you can strengthen your arguments by it. You commence your letter by telling me, that *you feel entirely convinced of the truth that the existence of a God can be demonstrated.* This was a challenge upon my ignorance of that matter, and it became you to demonstrate *affirmatively*, and not to draw conclusions *negatively*, by putting questions to me which all men at present acknowledge to be unanswerable.

But this matter of vegetable absorption is not so obscure but that a child may be taught its process. The roots of vegetables are dry and porous substances which readily absorb the surrounding moisture, and it is well understood, that the principle of absorption may be carried on by an ascension as well as by a descension, so as there be a sufficiency of liquid to saturate the lower parts. The principle of growth, I do not comprehend, and by no means feel ashamed to confess my ignorance. But I want no God as a cloak for that ignorance. I find that such knowledge, as I at present possess, has been acquired by my own labour and by the aid of friends, but to any thing superhuman I do not feel myself a debtor. Life is the only thing I owe to nature, and as I have

no freehold in that possession, and as I know that I must quit it at the influence of surrounding elements, I know of nothing that claims any gratitude from me for the advantages of life. I will improve my condition in life; I will seek pleasure; I will avoid pain; and I will do the same towards others as I wish them to do towards me. I will endeavour to increase their pleasures, their benefits, from a conviction that by so doing I can increase my own; but I will not pay homage to greater ignorance than my own: I will not create an idol for myself, nor worship those created by others. If my body be in chains, so long as I have a mind, that mind shall be free. I will endeavour to make others free. I will communicate all that I know, as fast as I can acquire knowledge, and improvement shall be the business of my life. I ask instruction from all; but I spurn at dogmas without demonstration: I detest religion, because it has no other foundation, and is evidently idolatrous; and I will cherish my chains if I cannot hold mental freedom upon any other tenure.

**RICHARD CARLILE.**

**TO MR. CARLILE.**

SIR, I received your note of November 24. You call on me in your last note to give you an explanation of the word *Atheism*. Whatever explanation or information is required, and in my power to give, shall be at your service with readiness and pleasure, though, I must first observe, you are evidently as displeased as J. E. C., when so often asked "what is intellect?" and that you as evidently shrink from a name and a word, as he from the examination you allude to. *Atheism*, according to the common acceptation, I take to be, the profession or belief of the non-existence of a supreme intellectual being, or superior intellectual beings\*.

I never heard that different men attached "different ideas," to the word *Atheism*: (perhaps it is infidelity you mean) however I will so far apologize as to say, I do not use it as a term of reproach, where I find such opinion honestly (though I must conceive blindly) entertained. I have, indeed, often said, taking the word in an abstract and unlimited sense, that no man is an Atheist.

\* Towards such a theism I confess myself an Atheist, which would not be the case if J. E. C. would exhibit his supreme or superior intellectual beings to man.

R. CARLILE.



ist, there is no one but acknowledges some superior power, every one must see mankind\* are under the controul of something; ask the wildest savage of the wood, that you are sure is human, and he will own it: he may not have asked himself the question, or have been asked the question before, but when he has, I mean, he will not deny that he is subject to something, and this something he will conceive † to have intelligence, and that as much superior to his own, at least, as the physical power which controuls him; it is for the very, very learned of civilized and polished lands to speculate till their minds lose nature's tone, it is for them to say the power which—"mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind," (because they see a few of the secondary causes or means which he employs) it is for them to say, he is not there. How long will it be before they find that nature's child, nature's erroneous child, is more in nature's favour than those who would treat her as a harlot.

Now, Sir, if you were to make an image, say of stone, wood, or plaister, you would not worship it; I well know you are too wise; you would know it could have no influence to do you good or harm: if you saw any one worship it, you would laugh at him, and justly; or if he thought it could exert any influence over him you would laugh; or if he thought it would one day set out a walking round the world, you would laugh at him: but stop! he would not worship it, or have any of those absurd notions, except he thought some divinity or intelligence resided within; but you, much wiser, know there is nothing of the kind resides in all nature; yet, strange as it may appear, she has a motion, and she has an influence, or rather you feel and know her power ‡. Methinks I hear you say, "Do you think, then, I worship Nature?" No! I answer, I know you neither talk to her, bow the head, nor bend the knee; but you acknowledge her as your superior, therefore you are in that sense no Atheist, (you have your Material God also) yet you degrade, debase her to an inferior, by denying her intellect; superior and at the same time inferior is an enigma you cannot solve, intellect being matter and matter not intellect is confusion confused §.

\* The same as all other kind.

R. C.

† This conception is no proof.

R. C.

‡ A barrel of gunpowder at my elbow—I dread the approach of a spark of fire—I know the power of exploding gunpowder; but I know no intelligence attached to it. Whilst I sit at my desk, a tremendous storm rages; I know its power, but nothing of its intelligence.

R. C.

§ Intellect is one of the many dissimilar varieties of the effects of matter in motion: not distinguishable in all matter but in animal matter only.

R. C.

The rude but unsophisticated mind can see that physical power is of itself no power, it must be originated and directed by some directing energy, and that directing energy must be a designing energy; must be vital and intelligent; unaided but untampered reason will see that inert matter can originate nothing any more than nothing can produce something; it is for you to shew, Sir, how you cut off design from direction and vitality from design. This I hope will be a satisfactory explanation of the word Atheism, at least why I used it.

In the next place you complain, that you could not find your way along the subterranean passages; these passages I will endeavour to enlighten for you. In the first place, I was required to demonstrate the existence of an intelligent or intellectual almighty Power: this, I conceive, I have done, this I shall positively affirm until some one can prove my argument fallacious\*; non-conviction or assertion to the contrary will not invalidate it, argument alone must confute argument, it must be shown to be erroneous; this you have not done, and (pardon me when I assert) I think you cannot do: but you turn round on me and say, "What is intellect? Let him explain that." I believe I need say no more in explanation of the gloomy caverns and recesses. You certainly, by such questions, (seem at least to) retreat where you wish not to be found.

But certainly if I could give any further explanation, I would not withhold it, notwithstanding I may appear "not to be pleased at being asked what is intellect." You told me intellect was matter; I have considered it as matter, as a property or quality of matter, and as the result of organization, or as perhaps you mean the quality of organized matter.

Now would you not be offended, if I was to ask you to explain what any one thing is, or was to tell you that you could not explain what any thing is; for instance if I was to ask you what was the difference between gold, silver, and lead? You would tell me to explain the difference between a wise man and a fool that would ask such a question†. But let us look a little closer. You know the sensible qualities of them, their colour in the first place, their different degrees of hardness, their malleability, fusibility, fixity, &c. But do you know what any of these qualities depend on? No, not even their colour, and if you knew all their secret formation, or secret influences or virtues which gave them their sensible qualities, you might be asked to develope the cause of those secret influences, and so on add-infinity‡.

\* I have seen no argument. Such a power would exhibit itself and need no support from words. R. C.

† Oh no! I would shew you three dissimilar varieties of matter. R. C.

‡ Here I would confess my ignorance. R. C.



If we reject as non-existent all which is not cognizable by our senses, or which we cannot comprehend, we may reject or disbelieve all existence, our own not excepted; for sensible qualities must depend on secret or latent virtues, and influences; for all those modifications and transformations of matter are transformable again, when brought into contact with those secret influences and virtues; for, to say they do not exist because you cannot see them, or to say they do not exist until they come in contact with another mode of substance, is just as ridiculous as to say understanding exists not till displayed, or to say bread has no virtue in it, till it is eaten.

It is certain, it is only by its operation or influence we know or discover intellect in each other; but by that influence or operation we know that it exists\*.

Now your all of nature, or all of existence, is matter; or rather your all of nature is nothing but that is cognizable by our senses, it must be admitted if it is the all of existence it must have put itself in motion and divided itself. Now I will give you the two horns of a dilemma to chuse which you will take hold of. If this all of existence, or undesigning matter, disposed the universe or sensible world as we see it, who gave its various parts their secret influences or virtues †? Amongst the rest intellect and life to man?

In that case there must have been another all of nature to have supplied these things. But this is ridiculous; there cannot be two alls; and one all cannot supply more than all. See how you like the other horn; if this all of existence or undesigning matter disposed the sensible world as we see it, and gave it its secret influences, or virtues; amongst the rest intellect and life to man, in that

case this all of nature or existence must have attached intellect and life to itself or matter; and if but in one instance the power must be unbounded and eternal; for the possession must be conceived coeval with the power of production: or the power of production is possession.

The fact is we have more certain knowledge of intellectual force and its consequent effect, than of any other cause and effect in nature; for instance we will and determine, and we see or feel the effect produced; here is no inference required, we are as certain as of our own existence that our will was the cause of such effect, which is far from the case with respect to the certainty, in physical causes and effects; in these we neither know the beginning nor the end; one object or circumstance follows, or is at-

\* There only where we see it.

R. C.

† Let J. E. C. first shew that those parts were ever without their present secret influences and virtues. It is he not I who endeavours to give existence to non-existence—to create creators or a creator.

R. C.

tached to another, and we can no more than infer a connection: but in those we are certain such a cause, and no other, produced such an effect; we are conscious both of the beginning and the end proposed: whereas physical causes and effects are but continued means of an intent unknown.

Then again, we know more of the nature of intellect, or intelligence attached to organized matter, than the internal arrangement of any mode of substance; we know it must be homogeneous, or of the same kind, whatever may be its compass; as fire must be of the same kind whatever may be its intensity: yet according to its intensity must be its effect.

Sir, you will excuse this digression or rather lengthened explanation into which I have inadvertently betrayed myself, for I meant merely to have observed, that whatever may be the essential basis of either intellect or matter, the conclusion is unalterable: the first cause must possess the one and hold dominion over the other; therefore their basis can have reference to nothing but his will\*.

The present or apparent evanescence of intellect is no confutation of its possible durability, any more than the mutations of matter are arguments of annihilation—its present attachment to a certain substance or a certain system—its attachment to organized or sensitive matter will not make a jot of difference in the abstract consideration of it, all that is required to be known is its existence, and the existence of one sole existence, the source of all existence from all eternity; this is sufficient to identify it with that sole existence or cause†. And this admitted, suppose an artist to produce a specimen of his art; say without trouble or expence; if he employ a machine of ten thousand movements, it is his own, the same as if it came from his hand direct. Sir, you talk of science. When you charge an electric battery do you collect the electric fluid, or do you create the electric fluid‡? Suppose you have the sensation of a pig, (I mean no disparagement) suppose you will, or design to have the intellect of a man. But you say what is it? Is it knowledge? If it is I say you collect it from surrounding objects as you do the electric fluid. Is it understanding? If it is, you call it up from the realms of non-existence. You more than “call spirits from the vasty deep,” and you say they do come! look to it, Sir!! And confine yourself to polishing, and conducting what you can collect from pre-existence.

\* J. E. C. has not yet proved that a first cause has need of a will.

R. C.

† As a part, dissimilar to other parts, but not as a whole.

R. C.

‡ Sir Richard Phillips would say that it was created. I plead ignorance. Knowledge is certainly created.

R. C.



Sir, do not account me arrogant. You have challenged the world; and I challenge you. You have said, "you war with the last of the Gods!" And I war with you. You say the victory "shall be this time on the side of man!" I say it shall not be so. I declare war against the modern Titans; and my victory shall be decisive. The lightnings might glance around the earth; and the thunders of Jupiter might shake it to its centre; but my victory shall be engraven on its face for ever\*.

Sir, you have favoured me and the rest of your readers with an extract of a letter from your friend, for which I certainly feel grateful,—I do not mean the anecdote; there is something as revolting in changing or professing to change important opinions, which must be of the last consequence, take them in what view you will, at the suggestion of an ignorant and wavering father†, as a crafty priest; it would be much better for the present school to adopt the discipline of the ancient one, and impose a five years silence ere they broach their opinions, for (not that I boast of my own) I know enough to know "a little learning is a dangerous thing‡."

But to return. I do not see why you should think what your friend says should induce me to take "a metaphysical journey on a new road." Your friend and myself travel the same road the greatest part of the way he has gone; and where he turns off, I do not mean to follow, but I rather think, by his seeming docility, I shall prevail on him to return to, or regain the road I travel.

He has said just what I have said, what I had been endeavouring to impress, that is, "We cannot infer what any secondary cause must be from the effect," "experience alone must guide us to it," "we know of no means essential to the end." He says, "You suppose there is a connection between what you call a cause and effect." "Whether there be a connection or not is what we can never discover." "If there be a why or a wherefore it is undiscoverable."

Now, as I before observed, you said, "We see the intellect, but we cannot see how the organ is produced which produces the intellect." Nor can I see that the organ does produce the intellect, i.e. that the organ either originates, or is a "means essential to the end," or indeed that any material means are essential to any end. All the qualities and properties of matter may be arbitrary.

\* Not with such weapons as you wield at present. Your Gods have felt my blows, but I have not yet felt yours nor theirs.

R. C.

† I did not know my correspondent before I read this passage. Would J. E. C. insinuate that both father and daughter had grown ignorant, and if so, will he explain how this can be done?

R. C.\*

‡ I deny the assertion, there can be no possible danger in learning.

R. C.

and MAY be all altered or reversed for ought we know; thus before you had asserted that the organ produced the intellect, you should have known how that organ was produced or what produced it, and whether it was a primary or intelligent cause; or a non-intelligent composition, or a combination of materials, producing intellect as an unalterable consequence; and which when discovered might of course be used by intellect in producing intellect, as certain as the homogeneous particles of metal form a mass: for if we could see how the organ is produced which produces the intellect, if we had sufficient knowledge to know, and art to combine or form this organ, to manufacture or create intellect, we could increase our own, no one gives away what he requires or wishes to retain: this would indeed be a tree of knowledge, we should be making every block into intellect, till there would be very few blocks left; or if we found out the art to make blocks and all, we should all be gods; but even then we should not have found out the tree of life, so we might all die as soon as we had found the art: but if we had found the tree of life, we could not then be all independent and infinite because there could be but one: thus, we should all lose our art and duration again as soon as that one pleased; therefore, I think, we had better remain as we are. But whatever Prometheus might have done of old, I do not think you, Mr. Carlile, will ever bring down, or cause fire to descend from heaven; at least to vivify or enlighten\*.

But, to be serious, it was these reflections crowding on my mind that occasioned me to say, "you should have been the last to have said thus much:" then I wished to impress on your mind that it was optional with an all-powerful being what means he would employ to produce an end designed, or what events and means he would associate together, as I instanced with respect to your piano-forte; and that you, though you acknowledged nothing but matter as the all of existence, yet as you well knew that thought or intellect existed, you must admit this as part of nature, existence, or matter: and that, having admitted it, you must acknowledge it the superior or controuling part of nature, and here you could not rest without making it absolute; therefore I took the liberty of calling intellect your God. This occasioned me to say, that "whatever formed this organic structure, possessed all the powers with which it is endued and could have exhibited them by other means." And to this, your friend, as if opportunely to shew the calculation true, says, as if for proof, that all we know of cause and effect is, "a circumstance occurs which is followed by another circumstance."

I must now make another remark to you concerning your friend; he certainly is an observing person, and is not unlikely in time to

\* I do not go to Heaven, or in search of a Heaven to find it. I know that fire is created by the contact of material substances.



become a philosopher: but the next time you communicate with him, just mention the name of Hume to him. Tell him the next time he penetrates into the bowels of the earth to explore a mine, not to be too fearful of parting with his companion, to search somewhat for himself, lest for the lack of a little boldness, and a little trouble he lose the richest vein of ore.

Were you not surprised when he said? "I will that my arm rise, and it does rise. Do I know the cause, no not I, do I know of any connection between my will and the action, not I indeed." Indeed! I do not think Hume authorizes quite all this; at least, if he does, common sense does not; when he has awakened himself as he hints you should, he may also see his error; what he says before is just; they are successional events of the connection of which we know nothing but by inference; we know neither the beginning nor the end, or that other means might not be substituted. Indeed, if he views the first cause as a designing cause, he will immediately see there are no means absolutely necessary to an end or a designed end; because, there can be no restriction to particular means, and that the only absolute causes which we can conceive are, the will of the first cause and the will of man. But, if "I will my arm to rise, and it does rise," what can I be more morally certain of, than that my willing is the cause of that rise? I cannot be more certain of my own existence; here is the cause and the end, and though we do not know the intermediate means, we know the connection does exist: we are unconscious of the blood flowing through our hearts, but it is none the less true. With all our boasted science, we know of little more than is necessary to be known\*. We see the vegetable increase in bulk before our eyes; but we were never initiated into the mystery of the process†.

Your friend announces that "your correspondent, J. E. C., will never find that intellect is the result of organization—any more than you will find his almighty power; both are inferences incapable of proof, the one as much as the other." Now, if I have endeavoured to prove, or think I have proved, or made out a certain proposition, which is incapable of proof, it is the more easy of refutation: to which refutation I invite your friend as well as yourself; in which, if you succeed, I will return my thanks (though it be with tears) for freeing me from error; and in my fall I will endeavour to imitate the dying gladiator, and fall resigned and composed.

But, before I close, I will beg leave to give a summary of what

\* Heigh day! What are we in search of then, if we know more than is necessary to be known? What do we seek by our discussion, Mr. J. E. C.?

R. C.

† That is no reason nor proof why we may not be so initiated.

R. C.

I call demonstration of the existence of an intelligent almighty power, or supreme being: that if your friend condescend to enter the lists, he may see at once what he will have to oppose.

1. Something has existed from all eternity. 2. All power has been from all eternity. 3. There can be but one independent existence. 4. That which has not self-direction and disposal cannot be independent. 5. That which has not vitality cannot have self-direction or disposal\*.

But matter exists and intellect exists.

But matter without intellect or vitality has not self-direction and disposal, but with intellect and vitality it has self-direction and disposal, and is included in all power—that has been from all eternity; of course they form but one identity or one independent existence.

Corollary. Independent existence can resolve itself into what form, substance, or consistence it pleases, of course, that consistence is impossible to be fixed by any thing but the will of this one independent being. Or his essence is incomprehensible, or undiscoverable.

Thus you will see, I have resorted to no pre-supposition, to no inference, and have taken no shelter under the word spirit, but have contended in the arena chosen by yourself.

I remain your sincere well-wisher and humble Servant,

J. E. C.

P. S. I hope nothing contained in this will have the appearance of asperity, if it has I assure you it is unintentional.

\* Your fifth proposition is by no means a necessary inference of the first four, which are granted. Who is to know what is meant by vitality in so important a question as the universe? All forces are directing forces: all forces proceed from other forces; but how can we connect that vitality which defines intellect with the known forces of matter?

R. C.



## INFLUENCE OF RELIGION—ITS EFFECTS BAD.

ADMITTING, for the sake of argument, the debateable question of the existence of a God, without parts or passions, at all, I cannot but think that *the system* which is built on the supposition of this being, and called *religion*, has been, is, and necessarily must be, extremely prejudicial to the temporal interests and happiness of men; and I take for granted that I need not, at this time of day, attempt to shew that if *this* be satisfactorily established, nothing can be urged, on the opposite side, as a set off or a countervailing advantage. If it can be shewn that, upon the whole, it is productive of a larger balance of evil over any little good which it may sometimes possess; if I shall prove this, I shall call upon your readers to throw off the disgraceful superstition which would render men miserable here, for the sake of some possible advantage which *may or may not* happen some few thousand millions of centuries hence, and which future advantage is, to say the least, extremely doubtful and uncertain.

I assert then that religion is inimical, and acts in a manner extremely hostile, to the interests and happiness of mankind. This it does, by splitting itself, and men, into innumerable sects and divisions, each of which, collectively and individually, is necessarily opposed to the other: the Unitarian must hate the Trinitarian, while the latter, in revenge, indulges himself in abusing, quarrelling with, persecuting, and (if he have the power) slaying the Unitarian. The revelation-man hates the natural-religionist; the baleful effects necessarily produced by the collision of Catholic and Protestant, are sufficiently conspicuous in Ireland. What makes the ignorant Hindoos cast themselves under the chariot wheels of their God, Juggernaut? What makes the people of Spain submit to the Christian Inquisition? What causes the people of this country to vote millions of money for the support of the worst and most useless class of consumers without production, to build new churches in every unappropriated niche of the town, whilst thousands of honest individuals are actually starving—to submit to the robbery inflicted in the shape of tithes, to impose all manner of useless privations on themselves—to deny themselves amusements, either innocent or laudable—to “tax pleasure by preliminary scruples and subsequent remorse”—to submit to the most outrageous system of morals which ever disgraced rational creatures? What is the cause of all heart-burnings, the disputes, the persecutions, the imprisonments, the slayings for “conscience” sake, but—religion? Nor let it be said that it is only “false religion” which does this—I care not whether it be true or false; it is religion which does it, for with-

out religion, there could be no "false"—besides, who shall say *which* is true? A parson, Mr. Colton, has said, that "where true religion has prevented one crime, false religion has created a thousand." What a tremendous admission is here! The case stands thus: there *can* be but ONE TRUE system, there ARE FIVE HUNDRED systems, and EACH of these *latter*, we are truly told, produces a thousand evils where the *former* produces one good." Such is the inevitable effect of men being influenced by religion, and not by morals! Thus let the question rest!

I have said that "each of these sects is necessarily opposed to all the others:" if this be so, the conclusion will not be unobvious. Let us illustrate this by an hypothesis. We know, that, when the *body* is sick, two or more doctors are frequently called in for the purpose of "consulting" together on the best means of making this sick body well, they debate and discuss; and having, perhaps, no interest to incline them to one remedy or reject another, they at length agree in recommending such means to be pursued as they think most likely to prove most beneficial to the patient. This is the case, where the doctors have no separate and conflicting interests to support. Now let us suppose that a milk and water, strolling-system doctor is called in to consult with one whose ideas of health are inseparable from a full habit, can any one imagine that these two "disagreeing doctors" would ever unite in any thing for *the good* of the invalid? And now to apply this to the case of two rival factions in the trade and business of religion, and see how the case will stand then. This we will do, by supposing that (not a *body*, but) a *SOUL* is "in danger of hell fire," to use the comprehensible summary of the Bible. Well, a man, from the nature of his belief (or want of belief) is in this scrape, and TWO BISHOPS, one a CATHOLIC and the other a PROTESTANT, are applied to by a third party, and requested to meet and deliberate on the best mode of rescuing the "heretic" from the predicament. The Protestant would of course hold out all *his* terrors for the purpose of subduing the affrighted patient—on the other hand, the Catholic would as surely inculcate the absolute necessity of the juggle which *he* professes, in order to "save the soul alive." Repeated discussions between these two hypocrites, instead of softening and curbing their mutual animosities, would make all their Christian hatred, all their religious antipathies, to increase and multiply—till at last, supposing that one of the jugglers did not chance to be knocked on the head by his clerical adversary—the men of religion would leave the soul to be "damned," rather than acknowledge the efficacy of the plan for the saving of it, as pointed out by the opposite faction! Can any reasonable man, who has seen any of the brutal effects necessarily attendant on religion doubt that this would be the result? Can we, then, expect that any two or more men, of opposing religions, will ever unite for the good of mankind? Can



we, in a word, be imbecile enough to think that a worshipper of the Jehovah, Jah, or God, (or whatever name he goes by) of the Christians, should wish well to a man who does *not* worship *his* idol? To conclude, is it in the nature of things that a man who has *any* religion should be a friend to his fellow men?

MORAL FROM THE FOREGOING.—That religion exceedingly depraves and corrupts the heart, and above all things, makes men hate, persecute, imprison, and destroy each other.

#### DIALOGUE BETWEEN A FANATIC AND AN INFIDEL.

"You are an infidel, and ought to be hanged—you are odious to God and man"—said a pious believer in the redemption of the world from the sin of Eve's having eaten an apple,—"*fair to the sight and pleasant to behold,*" which God had placed within her reach.

"How do you know that?" returned the sceptic. "O! you don't profess *our* religion," said the first, "*and therefore* you are wrong."

"But *what* is 'your religion?'—How do you *prove* it? Are any two of yourselves *agreed about it*? Who told you that *you* were right, and *all others wrong*? And who, supposing that you can satisfactorily answer those questions, who gave you leave to 'hang' me, *because* I am 'an Infidel?' Answer this, and I'll then tell you why I don't support your God"—rejoined the other.

"Our religion has been established too long, to heed any proof *now*, and as for the question from whom I received permission to hang you, I reply that *our* religion is established by law," returned the fanatic.

"The first part of your answer is singular enough," replied the philosopher, "I have yet to learn that *time* sanctifies *crime*, and that the circumstance of your juggle having existed for two thousand years, is any authority in its favour, or any reason why we should not now enquire into its origin. The same might be said, with equal grace, of extortion, rapine, war, murder, in short of every evil which oppresses and makes men miserable. What signifies it that a falsehood has existed for 'a thousand long years,' is it *less* a falsehood on that account? Does it *change its nature with age*, and become true now, though it was not true at its first promulgation? You say that *your* religion has 'existed so long that it stands in need of no proof now.'—I enquire, was it ever proved? Can any other reason for its continuance be given, than the ignorant taking, for granted, the prejudice of men? If this prejudice were once removed you would soon find yourselves obliged to attempt to adduce proof—notwithstanding the 'long time' during which your juggle has 'existed.'—The se-

cond branch of your replication may be very soon disposed of: your religion certainly is *now* the 'established,' and you persecute accordingly; the Catholic superstition was *once* the 'state religion'—and they did the same! A few years may see your idol again upset, and the 'obscene Ashtaroth' of your Catholic opponents once more uppermost, *their* plea of 'established by law' will *then* be as reasonable and as much entitled to respect, as *yours* is *now*. Would you admit Paganism, if it were 'established by law?' If *yes*, then I say you are influenced solely by prejudice, and not by reason: if *no*, then why should I receive yours? Why would you not subscribe to Paganism? Because you don't think it fitting so to do. Why don't I agree to *your* creed? Because I don't think it proper."

Fanatic:—"Ah! it is all mighty fine talking—but you'll never convince me."

Friend of truth:—"I am very much obliged to you for this *admission*, and need nothing further to assure me that your religion is founded on 'falsehood which cannot brook enquiry.' *Why* shall I 'never convince you?' Why, but because you feel that the juggle which you support won't admit of argument, and that you cannot 'give a reason for the hope that is in you.' I did not expect you to argue thus long with me—for seldom indeed is it that *we* can get a fair hearing, and I feel proportionably indebted to you for the patient attention which you have paid to me. I was of course, aware from the first, that you listened, determined in reason's spite, to be 'of the some opinion still.' Perhaps, at some future time, you will afford me a hearing on the question whether *religion, without morality, or morality, without religion,* is best calculated to make men good and useful, as citizens, fathers, and friends?"

"It is clear that a man without religion cannot be a moral man," was the answer.

"How is it 'clear?' Have you a shadow of argument to support this outrageous assertion? Can you produce me the names of ten clergymen, from out of the numerous body which your religion has generated, of mote exemplary moral conduct than *any* ten of our leading sceptics? However, we shall meet again in a few days, when I will recur to the subject. In the meantime, ponder on what I have said, and do not let your prejudice determine you '*never to be convinced.*'"



## ON THE MATERIALITY OR IMMATERIALITY OF THE MIND.

A PAPER READ AT A MEETING TO DISCUSS THAT SUBJECT, NOV. 9.

THE mind has been a subject that has engaged the attention of philosophers in all ages; nor has it yet ceased to attract the attention of the greatest living characters. When we see the mind thus endeavoured to be analyzed by the greatest characters, it may be deemed presumption in us, to attempt an elucidation of what so much time and talent has been spent upon. But let not this discourage us from our enquiries, but remember, that it is our duty to examine the deductions of the ablest philosophers for ourselves; and at least to endeavour to understand them, and submit them to the severest test we can bring them to; and not to shrink from making deductions the most opposite to the common received opinions, on the most dogmatical dogmas. The present mode of enquiry shall be to compare the functions of the mind with those of the body—its developement and decay; and then endeavour to draw the proper carrollaries, whether the mind be material, or immaterial. We must not expect demonstration in such cases; but we must be content to follow an analogy of the mind with the other animal functions; and I am inclined to think an analogy of this kind tantamount to a mathematical demonstration.

That the mind is not fully understood, or that there is a kind of a *mystery* attached to it no one will doubt: but not a mystery which has been revealed! But then are the other animal functions better understood? No one doubts about the liver secreting bile, or about the lungs fixing the oxygen, but does any one know *how* it is done? Notwithstanding we know *how* they perform their respective functions, would not the man be smiled at, who should assert that it was an immaterial principle that performed them? Some bold theorists, seeing the difficulties attached to the materiality of the mind; and unwilling to own their ignorance, roundly asserted that the mind was immaterial—that materiality could not think—without ever telling us how immateriality could think any more than materiality! Unfortunately for their system, they gave to their immateriality qualities incompatible with the known phenomena of thought: such as unchangeability, indivisibility, &c.; which are indeed necessary qualities of immateriality; for immateriality being the negation of matter, it follows that there would not be any thing to change, divide, &c.

Let us examine them fairly. Immateriality, is unchangeable, and mind, it is said, is immaterial. Is this obvious? Is mind

unchangeable? Let any one present examine his own mind and say if he thinks it is unchangeable. I may venture to affirm that, from childhood to death, the mind is in a continual state of change; and, therefore it may be said to be every moment a new mind! Here we have something which is unchangeable continually changing! a continual succession of eternal minds! For, if they be unchangeable they must be eternal. I make no doubt but that many here have new minds upon theological subjects, as essentially different from what they were, as they possibly can be; and surely such persons are not to be told that mind is unchangeable! Again how came we to have minds so very different if the mind be immaterial? You will not say that we have portions of this same unchangeable something?

But, say some of you, if the mind be material, how is this change to be accounted for? The question is fair and I will attempt an elucidation. Man forms but one of a system of things; and, as a sensitive being, he is continually acted upon by the surrounding things. We know that there are varieties of matter, and these varieties of matter acting, through the nerves, upon the one sensorium—must produce different degrees of sensation, according to the difference of the bodies acting, and acted upon. If a man was in a situation where all things caused an equal degree of heat, would he not conclude that all things were of the same degree of heat? But if he came in contact with one thing colder, finding the variety, he would have room to conclude that, there might be more if he was in a situation to take cognizance of them. It is the same in theological subjects; one kind of reasoning strikes the mind so forcibly, that it thinks there is no other evidence; and perhaps the next completely, as it were, drives the other out. These are simple cases, and the latter such as every one present can prove the truth of; and as such they have been selected.

Their immateriality is indivisible; consequently, if the mind be immaterial it is also indivisible. By what strange fatality they made mind immaterial, consequently, indivisible, I know not! If the mind be thought, as it is generally understood to be, it is divisible in every sense of the word. Is not the mind employed in the study of astronomy, chemistry, and a thousand other subjects? And if this be not divisibility what do they mean by it? What I understand by divisibility is, the capability of a body to be divided into parts of its quantity. Then does not the aggregate knowledge of man form one mind? or is man to have a thousand different minds; one for each subject? But even allowing them this, the subject itself is divided into different parts, therefore, there must be different parts of the mind; unless one part takes in all parts of the subject; and this subject being thought or mind, there must be different parts of the mind, that is, the mind is divisible! But perhaps they will say (for there is, nothing



but what they will stoop to) that some of these thousand minds we have been talking about, take one part of the subject, and some another; which does not mend their case; because when the different minds had handled their respective parts of the subject, they would have to put their respective handlings together, to make one subject, which would be conjunction; and if there be conjunction, there must be divisibility!

But all this is only wasting words in endeavouring to make out a plausible case for the immaterialist. The case is simply this, is mind the aggregate of knowledge? If it is, it certainly is divisible. But if it be not the aggregate of knowledge, what is it? Has that which has no knowledge any mind? And if it has, is not every species of matter mind? If so, we shall have mind material with a vengeance! They may take which part of the question they please, both are against them.

It has been said that memory is incompatible with the materiality of the mind. But is memory more compatible with immateriality? Let us try. Immateriality is unchangeable, as has been before stated: and this unchangeability is urged as a reason why we have a recollection of what is past, or memory. Why, surely, they did not know what they were grasping at when they grasped this! In the first place do we never forget any thing? Is there any one here who has a perfect recollection of every action of his life? If there be not, where is the unchangeable immateriality? But then if memory be immaterial, and if immateriality be unchangeable, we could not acquire knowledge to forget! Because, if it be unchangeable, it has been in the same state it is in at present from all eternity, therefore, our knowledge was as great an eternity ago, as it is at present. But, if they say our knowledge has not been in the same state from eternity, how can they say that it is unchangeable? Because, if there was once a time when the memory did not know, there must have been a time when it began to know; and when it began to know, it certainly changed from the state in which it did not know. And if it changed once there is room to suppose that it will change again! But, why is memory incompatible with the materiality of the mind? I consider memory and thought to be nothing more than a *secretion and fixation of sensation*, and would not any one here smile, if some one was to tell him, that he could not tell the difference between coming in contact with fire and ice? What is memory but a recollection that fire is hot and ice cold?

But, say they, the body is continually undergoing a change of substance, and therefore, as the matter of the mind evaporated, the memory would evaporate with it. Cannot the mind communicate the impressions it has received, as well as the matter of the other parts of the body can communicate sensation to the new particles that amalgamate with it? By the same train of reasoning in which we may conclude that the memory is removed

by the accession of new particles, we may conclude that sensation is removed: and no one doubts whether he has sensation, though he be convinced that he has a perfectly new body: and he is likewise convinced that the new particles have acquired the sensations which the body previously possessed; because, he did not feel the particles acted upon, before they were amalgamated with him. And though he has a new body he is satisfied that he tastes with the same mouth, smells with the same nose, feels fire hot, and ice cold, as perfectly as he did before. Is the acquisition of sensation less wonderful than the retention of sensation? I think every unprejudiced mind will exclaim, no! And if the memory forgets its impressions, does not the body also cease to have the same sensations? Do not age and circumstances cause parts of the body to have different sensations, and in some instances none at all? Where then is the difference? Is there not a strict coincidence in all the circumstances? And who is he that wants immateriality to cause sensation? To do this he would have to give immateriality to all other animals; and this they will not do; because their pride would be wounded! What, all animals equal with man! Oh! shocking! But this they must do, or make their immateriality changeable, for animals have sensations and knowledge. And this would shock them so, that to think of it would, I believe, throw them into hysterics!

It has been said, that, if the mind be material, it must act upon mechanical principles; that is, there must be a kind of little attendant upon the mind to seek out the ideas wanted. The mind must have told this little attendant what idea it wanted, or else the little rogue knew better what the mind wanted than the mind itself! It is said, that, to get at an idea, we should have all the more recent ideas to tumble over, so we should have the little fellow tumbling up the knowledge we have of astronomy, chemistry, and all the ideas we have acquired, since that which the little fellow was seeking; in short, there would be a complete uproar in the mind! I need not ask you, if any of you have taken cognizance of this little gentleman. They must have forgotten who use this argument, that the idea wanted is part of the mind and that it is the mind seeking into itself and not something exterior to it. And the idea of a body acting mechanically upon itself is to me mechanical nonsense!

Do not we see the mind childish in childhood; adult in manhood, and decrepid in old age and disease? These are established truths. What then are the obvious carollary to all this? Why that the mind is material, and that all the talk about immateriality and its consequences is fictitious?

JAMES PENNY.

Millbridge near Leeds.



## TO THE EDITOR OF THE REPUBLICAN.

Westminster to Wit: Nov. 26, 1823.

## QUOTATION.

"You read every where of prodigies, of predictions accomplished, of miraculous cures performed in the temple of Esculapus, do not believe a word of them. How many absurd facts, how many fables shocking to common sense, what then? Do not believe a word of them, I do not even believe ocular witnesses, when they tell me things repugnant to common sense."

VOLTAIRE.

SIR,

Your letter to Mr. Allan Mac Fadyen, page 557, No. 18, Vol. 8, of "The Republican," makes me smile, having suffered from the same imputation, because I may too frequently talk on various subjects. But my chief reason for noticing John Wood's child, is, I do not go so far in believing as you do, as to the power of the nerves, or any other impression being able to produce scarce any effect, and especially such a singular one as Mr. Fadyen reports. And as a proof for my scepticism, I recommend you and all the readers of "The Republican," to read Dr. William Buchan's advice to mothers, for therein is contained sound reasons for no such effects having been produced in nature. But as Dr. Brewster is so near the spot, and being an ingenious philosopher, I hope we shall see a clear account of this phenomenon of nature.

Sir, your well-wisher,

I. S.

Five Shilling's Street, Westminster.

## TO MR. RICHARD CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

SIR,

Glasgow, Nov. 24, 1823.

HAVING had no opportunity of perusing your Republican of the 7th current until this day, I had no thought that you gave publicity to my letter of the 29th ult. as I only expected that you would give your opinion of the circumstance which I, as well as many others, thought wonderful. It appears to me now, however, that I wrote to the proper quarter for information on a subject which puzzled me. As you have elucidated the cause of such appearance better than any I have heard speaking of it. As for our great men, they took no notice of it, and the journals give their opinions of its authenticity yea or nay which ever they thought would please their readers best.

As for my opinions concerning a first cause, I, as yet, believe, that some such power exists\*, and I was led to believe from some of your writings that you questioned the existence of any such. I do not, nor ever did, think myself capable of describing its appearance, and to compare it to the likeness of a man, I always thought presumptuous. But, as I considered that man with all his endowments could not make a worm, a fly, or any other insect, or animal, or give life to any being whatever, I considered also that there must be some being (name it what you will) or first cause, which must be almighty, which is and was capable of forming living beings and giving them life†, that the same being must also be the Creator of the universe, as I cannot comprehend‡ how such mighty masses as the Earth, Sun, &c. would be accumulated by chance, or how it was possible that these masses could contain such matter as to cause such inconceivable movements in the region of space: from this alone I concluded, that there is a creation and consequently a creator. But as I cannot prove its existence in any other way I will tell you I'll never disagree with you or any man for holding a different opinion; probably, some one hereafter will be able to set the question at rest,

\* So do I believe—so believes every man from necessity. We err only in giving it attributes gratuitously.

R. C.

† Certainly—unquestionable—the proof is that such living beings do exist. But the power that produces an animal is not the same power that destroys it. The universe, is a universe of powers.

R. C.

‡ You find your proof of an intelligent Creator in your incapacity to comprehend!

R. C.



whether for or against me, I am indifferent, provided it tends to the developement of truth.

ALLAN MAC FADYEN.

P. S. You printed my last letter with the letter T instead of F in the signature, you seemed to complain \* that my last was troublesome, but you may publish this or throw it in the fire when you read it, as the only trouble I expect it will put you to is the reading of it.

Just after I had sent off Mr. Allan M'Fadyen's letter to the Press, I saw an extract from a Glasgow paper, in which it was asserted, that two medical men had examined the child in question, and had decided, *that there was no one distinguishable letter on its eyes, but that the iris of the eye was singularly shaded.*

R. C.

#### FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF LONGINGS IN THE MOTHER.

DEAR SIR,

Dec. 7, 1823.

THERE is nothing to make me believe the story of the child born at Newton Stewart, with its father's name engraven on its eyes, but ocular demonstration: to reason upon it would be folly, without the fact being satisfactorily established. Now, as you seem to think that the longings and imagination of the mother may produce various marks upon the child, I have inclosed a paper on that subject, written by a Mr. Pole, who, I believe, either is or was a lecturer on midwifery in London. I am the more inclined to place confidence in his opinion, as it exactly coincides with my own experience. I have practised midwifery near forty years, and, in that time, have been interrogated by some hundreds of women, wishing to be informed as soon as the child made its appearance, if it had not certain marks upon it, which I can aver never was the case in a *single instance*. I have also seen many children born with marks upon them, some deficient, and others with supernumerary parts, and a few monsters; yet these occurrences were *invariably* unexpected at the time, though some of the mothers, with the assistance of the gossips have in due time found out a cause.

\* No, indeed, I was both pleased and amused with the inquiry.

R. C.

PAPER BY MR. T. POLE, COPIED FROM THE MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL JOURNAL, FOR JUNE, 1800.

It is my opinion that no malformation of the foetus, in any of its parts, can take place after it has once acquired its proper form, except what may arise from pressure, owing to some unfavourable position in utero, or from inflammation of two surfaces in contact with each other. The first may produce incurvation, or other distortion of parts. The second, adhesions. Instances of this latter we not unfrequently meet with.

To account for the various malformations which are produced in an endless variety, appears to me to be beyond the stretch of finite wisdom.

I cannot suppose it possible for the human mind, under any, even the most violent impressions, to disfigure the foetus. If we could admit, as well authenticated, indubitable facts, all the fanciful histories related by grave writers, respecting the wonderful malformations in the human foetus, as corresponding to previous mental impressions, either from frights or longings, there could be no difficulty in admitting the mother's imagination to have a controul in the original formation, or in deforming it when once well formed. None of my own patients, whom I have delivered of monstrous foetuses, or other women with whom I have been acquainted, ever expressed any apprehension of peculiar appearances in their children before delivery; but after they have been informed of the circumstances they are prompt enough to recur to some past occurrence, in order to explain them, which had no affinity to the appearances on their children. On the other hand, a number of my own patients, as well as many others, have, from some shocks, or peculiar impressions excited in their minds, had strong prepossessions that their children would be deformed or marked with corresponding impressions, but in no one instance have I ever known it to be the case.

We cannot possibly entertain the most distant idea, that when a child is produced with two heads, or without a head, that it has been occasioned by the mother's having longed for such a thing, or that she had seen such a child in the streets or elsewhere, neither can a scientific man, possessed of his rational faculties, conceive it possible in the power of the mother to add even a supernumerary finger or toe to a foetus, in any stage of gestation, or to remove from the foetus, and from the uterus, an extremity already well formed, or to transpose any of its parts all of which every now and then occur to our notice. If we admit the mother's mind, imagination, or will, to have the power to perform such mi-



raculous feats with such an admirable dexterity in the human species, we must go still farther, and admit the same power in the inferior parts of the creation, for we are presented with precisely similar deviations, in quadrupeds, birds, &c.

Some men, strenuous to establish their opinions in favour of the influence of the mother's mind, contend even for the possibility of these effects in such animals being produced by the same cause, and say, there is not that vast difference between reason and instinct, or between human ideas and those of other animals: that we arrogate too much when we compare the perceptions of the human mind with those of some of the more sagacious quadrupeds. But we do not observe it to be among such that the extraordinary effects in question are produced.

However, if they will contend that they arise from the causes assigned, if they will refer the multitude of phenomena to the powers of the mind, perhaps they will have no objection to carry their favourable opinions one step further into the vegetable kingdom, and suppose the innumerable instances of monstrosity, which daily occur to our notice are produced there by the same cause, especially as there appears so great a similarity in them to those animals, or, at least, as much so as the nature of the two can possibly admit. So that after all has been said by writers on both sides of the question, or perhaps all that can be offered on the subject, we must be content to sit down and confess that the true cause is involved in inscrutable mystery, as are many more of Nature's laws. We can only view them as *lusus naturæ*; the true cause of which, or the manner in which the admirable powers of nature are combined to effect them, will probably remain in the repository of her secrets to the end of time, as humiliating proofs of our limited comprehension.

One remark I have made of late is, that far the larger proportion of monsters are females, at least in the human subject. Those which I have collected do not admit of a single exception; though I have certainly seen several instances of male monsters: but those deviations from the common mode of Nature's operations have been generally in the organs of generation, yet, in this respect too, the majority has been in females. I have availed myself of this opportunity of contributing my part to the doing away of those opinions which do not appear to be well founded, and which frequently excite considerable distress in the minds of pregnant women, who meet with alarming occurrences liable to agitate the mind, and thence give them painful apprehensions of their being productive of some disgusting formation in their children.

## THE REV. G. C. SMITH.

THIS gentleman is now holding forth at various Gospel-shops in London, and the burden of his argument at each of them, from what I can learn, is money "to support the cause of Jesus of Nazareth." So that this God cannot propagate his doctrine without the aid of money, if we are to believe Mr. Smith.

Hearing that Mr. Smith was going to preach at a Chapel in Pimlico on Sunday last, I had the curiosity to go and hear him. The chapel was much crowded, but chiefly by women. His text was the 26th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and the 9th and following verses: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," &c.

Mr. Smith began his sermon by telling us what a wicked wretch Paul was before his conversion. That, "he was the greatest enemy Jesus of Nazareth had—that his greatest delight was in punishing his followers—such a wretch as Saul of Tarsus (says he) perhaps never existed—but after he had *bit the dust* (his own expression) on his road to Damascus, he became his best friend. Paul, when before Festus, used his conversion as a proof of his being in the right way to heaven, and he (Mr. S.) advised all who were present to use the same argument to infidels of the present day; as it was the most powerful one, and must confound the enemies of Jesus of Nazareth." In speaking of the imprisonment of Paul, he said, "that he had often thought that God was to blame to allow such a man as to Paul be shut up in prison for two years; and had wondered to himself how this could be! But reflected, that if he had not been imprisoned, he never could have appeared before those great characters AGRIPPA and FESTUS, to defend the glorious doctrine of Jesus of Nazareth. Here it is, my friends, (said he) that we see the wisdom and goodness of God."

Now, for my own part, I cannot see any goodness in the case; for had I been God, I would have brought him before these great personages without any imprisonment at all! and it is a very poor compliment to God, I think, to say that he cannot do good, without first doing evil. Had I been God, I would have made man perfect at once; and have given to him one true and unalterable religion, so that he should not have had it in his power to err: I would have made all mankind happy in the enjoyment of the most exquisite pleasures unalloyed with pain; and where is the man, I would ask, that would not prefer such a God Almighty?

Mr. Smith bespattered Jesus of Nazareth with a great deal of praise for selecting such a wicked wretch as Paul for a minister



of his gospel, and seemed to think that the greatest infidel of the present day, may probably be chosen for the same honourable post. Mr. S. makes use of the words *infidel* and *wicked* as synonymous terms, and very kindly points out hell as the reward of all who dissent from his creed.

The most striking part of his sermon was an anecdote which he related as follows: "About two years ago, I was travelling in a stage coach in company with a white-headed gentleman, who was a perfect stranger to me. We got into conversation and I found that he was an infidel. I said to him 'what a pity, Sir, to see a man like you with one foot in the grave and the other scarcely out, an infidel and an enemy to God. You may depend upon it, Sir, that if you die in your present state of mind, that you will lift up your eyes in *hell* and call on the redeemer when it is too late.' I made this further remark to him; 'I do not know your name, Sir, but perhaps I may find it out, and if I do, I shall keep my eye upon the obituary in the newspapers, and should I see yours among the rest I shall say to myself, I wonder where is the soul of that white headed gentleman now.' After I had parted with him, I learned that he was Lord Erskine, the late Lord Chancellor, and a few days ago I saw an account of his death in the newspapers."

This anecdote may be true, but it appears to me to be false, for two reasons.

First, it does not appear probable to me that Lord Erskine would be travelling in a stage coach.

Second, I always understood that he was a religious man. But the man is dead, and Mr. Smith knew that he could make the statement without fear of contradiction. But he ought to be careful in putting forth such statements; for should this get to the ears of the sons and daughters of Lord Erskine, it would doubtless hurt their feelings to know that their father was gone to *hell*: that is, if they are as ignorant as the dupes of Mr. Smith, which I presume is not the case. Mr. Smith concluded by recommending the whole of his hearers to subscribe liberally when the plate came round for that it was to support the cause of God.

JOHN JONES.

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### TO MR. JOHN JONES.

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FRIEND JONES, thou'st escap'd from those merciless gangs,  
 The blood-hounds in tyranny's cause;  
 Who'd have wounded and torn thee with poisonous fangs,  
 And inflicted upon thee most terrible pangs,  
 Had they once got thee under their claws.

For the miscreants well know that the knowledge you seek,  
 Would both them and their system destroy;  
 Hence upon thee, the weight of their malice they'd wreak,  
 Thy spirit by torture and tyranny break;  
 Then exult with a demon-like joy.

The tyrant and priest of each country and age,  
 Though in no other point they agree;  
 Have always united with malice and rage,  
 In rude warfare with knowledge and truth to engage,  
 And with all that is noble and free.

The base priests that beguile, and fell kings that destroy,  
 In fair Truth's foul antipodes dwell,  
 Where to brutalize man all their wiles they employ,  
 Dark ignorance and error their heaven is of joy,  
 And bright science their terriblest hell.

For at the first beamings of knowledge they find,  
 They will start from their dens with affright,  
 And with bulleying and blarney together combin'd,  
 Will strive to recover their empire o'er mind,  
 And keep man in error's dark night.

From the depths of my soul fell perdition I say,  
 To those fell heartless elves;  
 To Beelzebub's kingdom, I'd send them away,  
 Where the tyrant may vapour, and priest he may pray,  
 And as wise men we'll govern ourselves.

R. S.

JOHN JONES.

TO MR. JOHN JONES.

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